

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

Vol. X

DECEMBER 1955

No. 114

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EDITORIAL

THE letter on the subject of Neurotics and Charity which was published in the August-September issue of this year has stirred up considerable interest. Articles and letters have been sent to the Editor in large numbers describing the right psychological treatment that the Christian should attempt when confronted by a neurotic neighbour. Some of these contributions we published in the October issue and others are presented to the reader in the following pages. The enthusiasm for the subject is a sign of the direction of many minds today. For some decades now people have become increasingly engrossed in psychology, a fact which in our own field is mirrored in contemporary spiritual reviews which contain quite a high percentage of psychological articles. For various reasons, however, THE LIFE has so far refrained from laying much stress on this subject. A great deal of the positive contribution made by modern psychoanalysis has in fact been taught under a different form by theologians and spiritual writers for many centuries. A study of any of the classic mystical writings, such as *The Cloud of Unknowing*, reveals a 'sound psychology', and indeed present-day authorities on the subject quarry freely from those writings. What is new in the modern science is its technique and systematization. As a therapy used on its own for curing the maladjusted or neurotic, its effects seem slight compared with those of ordinary straight-forward medicine. And finally the technique itself seems to lead people—especially the amateur dabbler—into a sterile interest in their own internal processes. For these reasons the general reader is on safer ground when studying the essentials of psychology hidden in the traditional spiritual books, than in being led to think he knows something of the technique of the psychotherapist through picking up a smattering of the terminology in general articles on the subject. Meditation on the works of Walter Hilton or St John of the Cross will not encourage him to interpret his own dreams or look for reasons for his own misconduct in the squabbles of his parents.

At the same time it is important not to minimize the value of the discoveries of sound psychology nor to ignore its place in the training of the Christian in his struggle for integrity in Christ. It has become a practice in many religious orders to call in some type of psychotherapist when dealing with difficulties which are

obviously not entirely a question of morals, such as for example severe attacks of scruples.

It is useful therefore from time to time to consider the relevance of modern psychology to Christian life. But there should always be present this *caveat*—the practice of the technique or the use of the knowledge acquired by psychology should be restricted to the expert and as far as possible to the Christian expert. The world is at present overpopulated by the amateur psychologist morbidly interested in everyone's dreams and detecting complexes and neuroses in every show of irritation or loss of temper.



CHARITY AND THE NEUROTIC

DR F. B. ELKISCH

G.H.'s letter in the August-September issue of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* has found wide interest. Two priests and two doctors have already given their expert advice on a situation in which an ordinary person with no specific psychological experience or training is called upon to meet, efficiently and in a Christian manner, the difficulties of living with a neurotic member of the family. The correspondents pointed to the danger of being eaten up by the neurotic and admonished those who are in constant contact with them to be prudent and not to mistake for Christian charity a weak, doormat-like attitude which allows the neurosis of the individual unlimited freedom in producing itself in ceaseless speech, the performance of all those many and varied antics of which the neurotic is capable and intruding into the privacy of other members of the family. The nature of neurosis and the correct attitude towards it was widely discussed and, if in approaching the problem from a slightly different angle, I touch on something that has been said before, I beg the reader's indulgence.

As a scientific problem 'neurosis' has been tackled for a long time now. It began fifty years ago with Freud who, through his method of approaching the unconscious mind, has become the father of modern depth-psychology. Since then many workers have been engaged in discovering the nature of neurosis and its cure. While all this work is of great theoretical and therapeutical importance, little attention has been paid to the practical difficulties arising from living in close touch with neurotics. Whilst

the doctor realizes that such a disturbed person creates great havoc in the family, he possibly does not consider it his task to educate the more normal members in their method of behaviour towards the sick person. The doctor is not called upon to experience daily, hourly even, the tensions which exist in a neurotically disturbed family but sees the patient only for a limited time in his consulting room. The gap, therefore, between the doctor, who in the security of his profession can more easily maintain an objective and detached attitude, and that of the harassed family, who must have the neurotic always with them, is not easy to bridge. Doubtless G.H. and all those in a similar position feel that, with a little advice and direction, they too could and should do something to help their less fortunate members and themselves. Perhaps some have already looked for such direction in the form of a book in the hope that it would give principles to guide them in their attitude and behaviour in a home where, at any moment in any day, relationships may become upset by neurotic tensions and explosions. Such a book has still to be written and if ever it were its value would be questionable because in psychology, even more than in any other science, the axiom that 'a little knowledge is a dangerous thing' applies. G.H. does not wish to do the work of the doctor or psychologist whose work is to deal with the disease *directly* and bring the patient to a point where he can reform his falsely orientated psychological system. He obviously wishes to take part in the curative process, however, and either by his personal experience or his natural insight he points to a wide field in which a lay person, in a kind of lay-apostolate, can give invaluable help *indirectly* to the neurotically disturbed for he can tackle that most important element in nervous diseases, the environment.

I propose to discuss two factors which I think will go a long way towards answering G.H.'s questions. The first factor concerns the individual inner attitudes which create the psychic climate of the family and the second deals with the environment of external circumstances. The active, energetic and rather more extraverted type of person may, perhaps, look upon the first point as of lesser value than the second, but he will be well advised not to make too hasty a judgment for each point has values which complement the other.

With regard to my first point there is very little advice to be

given on what one can 'do' or 'not do'. It is rather a matter of what one can or cannot 'be'. Success or failure depends with nervous people primarily and to a great extent on the qualities of the personality. A person's 'healing powers partly, sometimes largely, depend on the impact of the personality, on what he is and believes'.¹ Psychology has been called, and rightly, a method of re-education. In the educational world the central problem, which has never been tackled in a practical way, is the 'education of the educator'. This tenet is particularly applicable in the field of psychology. The parents, relatives and friends who live with neurotics should, therefore, take a good look at and into themselves. Psycho-analysis is, of course, not suggested but it will be worthwhile to remember relevant principles. 'Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect', said our Lord. He does not ask for perfect actions; they will follow by necessity (as day follows night) in relation to the standard of perfection attained. Actions that are right, good and helpful arise spontaneously from an attitude which is sound, strong and well-balanced. G.H.'s quotations, 'If any one demands your coat, give him your cloak also' and 'If he compels you to go a mile, go with him twain', have to be understood in this sense, for separated from the true source such actions have little meaning or value and might even be dangerous. Only too often they merely demonstrate the pride that is felt in the exercising of Christian charity and the remoteness of the real goal is hardly realized. The neurotic, being far more sensitive than the ordinary person, will immediately sense any artificiality; he will react with deep bitterness if he sees that kind words and charitable actions are merely part of a 'treatment'—in other words, are 'put on' for a purpose and are not the expression of a genuine charitable attitude. Furthermore, honesty and sincerity, qualities essential in our relationship with nervous people, require to be accompanied by an understanding of the nature of neurosis.

The neurotic, as G.H. rightly remarks, is ill and should not be judged morally, for the neurosis is not the patient's fault, he has not brought it upon himself deliberately. Although his behaviour and reactions may frequently give an opposite impression, the neurotic longs to be normal. Accusing a person of being weak-willed, telling him to pull himself together and make an effort to

do better may be suitable treatment for a normal person, but for a neurotic it is not only unsuitable but, more often than not, quite unjustifiable since he is not in charge of the situation. He is in the tragic position of being caught in a trap from which he is unable to escape unaided but is swung round and round in the same narrow ego-centred psychological system where, in isolation, he lives cut off from the normal feeling reactions most people experience. Although the direct feelings, such as joy and sorrow, love and hate, so to speak, by-pass the neurotic, they are, nevertheless, part of those life processes which follow each other in rhythmic sequence. The neurotic's reactions to these experiences as they occur in his own inner, private emotional world may often promote behaviour which, to the outsider, unaware of the inner complications, appears in such forms as sarcasm, cynicism, sickening sentimentality, negation or aggression. It will often produce the pseudo-tragic who seems to enjoy his misery. A clearer insight into his nature shows that all these are but poor surrogates for the spontaneous positive feelings he has missed. Such a person genuinely suffers under the tyranny of his psychological system and longs to be free. He needs to be understood, to be helped. Arguing and talking at him and trying to convince him intellectually of his unreasonable behaviour will have no positive result. It is common knowledge that even with normal people such an approach is usually ineffective; hence the proverb: 'Convince a man against his will, he is of the same opinion still'. A real understanding, a sympathetic feeling into the other's situation that is free from emotional entanglement with his problems, respect for the dignity of his personality and opinions are some of the fundamental factors which may help the neurotic to accept himself and look out upon the world with confidence and freedom. The neurotic, if enveloped by the atmosphere such an attitude creates, will in consequence feel less frightened and resentful and grow brave enough to venture out of his isolation. The lay person, familiar with the ramifications and distortions of the neurotic nature, will carefully guard against moral judgments colouring his attitudes. We all have a strong inclination to bring moral judgments to bear upon others but there is a far greater propensity to pass judgment upon the neurotic than upon the normal person. It is an insidious tendency and I feel, that, un-awares, G.H. was motivated by it when he, rather reluctantly,

suggested that 'neurosis' might be the 'modern form of plague'. This analogy is tempting but correct only in so far as both, plague and neurosis, are diseases. However, it should not be forgotten that the plague is an illness of a particular nature and that, in medieval times, it was regarded as a scourge, the manifestation of divine vengeance and punishment. I am sure that G.H., aware of their presence, would not allow these moralistic undertones, which the neurotic would detect immediately, to influence his idea of and attitude towards neurosis. Neurosis is not a plague, it is rather the modern equivalent of conditions which in previous times was referred to as 'melancholy'. Also G.H., quite naturally, seems to be interested in and, perhaps, a little afraid of the infectious nature of psychological disturbances. It is true they have this characteristic but the disease is not transmitted by an external agent, that is to say by a bacillus, as it is in infectious conditions. When a psychological illness is 'caught', nothing new is induced but an inherent psychic mechanism which responds to the infecting psychic power is triggered off. It is necessary for everybody to guard against this effect. The sensitive people, of whom G.H. speaks, are in particular danger of response.

The correct practical attitude to neurosis further demands the avoidance of drawing too sharp and distinctive a line between the neurotic and the normal. These terms are used for lack of finer definition. Actually both, neurotic and normal, are in the same boat and, as Dom Oswald Sumner said, are suffering from the result of original sin or, speaking in psychological terms, from a disintegrated psyche, and any difference is only one of degree, not of kind. Those who are normal and well-adjusted and, therefore, not classified as neurotic, do, of course, exist but, perhaps, sometimes only because they have met with happier circumstances. They have found or were placed in a milieu or lived in a period to which their particular nature was suited. If by circumstances such an apparently well-balanced person were forced to live under uncongenial and frustrating conditions, a hidden neurotic pattern might manifest itself in symptoms which the so-called normal person would consider impossible for him to exhibit. But the story of many P.O.W.s gives ample proof of the fact that, at least temporarily, healthy people may react in a neurotic way. Looking at our family neurotic, fixed in his psychic system, we should avoid saying or even thinking (perhaps in a pharisaic

manner): 'He is neurotic and I am normal'. Rather should we say: 'But for the grace of God. . .'.

The ideas so far presented, if understood and put into practice will help to create an atmosphere in which a more objective view can be taken of the neurotic. This, in turn, will lessen the tension of negative emotional entanglements. It is, of course, very difficult to maintain the right attitude while family life with its responsibilities makes so many demands. 'How on earth', G.H. may well say, 'can one practise these good precepts when one is neither a saint nor a super-man?' Answering this question brings me to the second point, the factual climate of the environment.

The family, we Catholics hold, is a sacrosanct institution. It is the fundamental unit of all social life and should be kept strong and sacred. We all know these statements to be true, but when we look at the small and almost miserable units which nowadays exist, we perhaps ask: 'Do they really deserve the name of Family?' It might be wise to look at this fact and admit that the family has been sacrificed on the altar of modern civilization and is now only a travesty of the strong, large, protective unit which formerly a man was proud to refer to when speaking of his 'people'. In olden times the family had a head, the respected *pater familias* whose opinion was law for its members. Children were born, lived, whether sick or healthy, and died within its circle. When they married, they did so not so much as individuals but as members of the family. It was the centre of life and, as a magnet, attracted and held the members. Even the feuds between families exemplify the strength by which the individuals were identified with the soul of the family. This powerful, solid structure gave protection and security. If one of the members was difficult or 'melancholic' he was carried by the collective of the family. The influence of such a one, straining our modern homes, came to nothing in the strong and sane atmosphere of the group. No psychologists were required, for any necessary cure was provided by life itself in its free and natural functioning through the rich and varied interplay of the individuals comprising the group. One can easily imagine that the effect of many children upon each other, not in overcrowded houses but in the natural environment of life on farms or in small towns, had a corrective and formative influence and that a difficult nature, except in extreme cases, was

absorbed easily by the family without damage. Modern family life runs on different lines. The *pater familias* scarcely exists. The emancipation of women has influenced the position man has held in the world for thousands of years; even his status in the family is involved. The modern family is small, consisting only of three or four members, seldom more, and all dominated by the attractions and demands of modern life. The family has little to offer and its members are driven to look for an interest or centre outside. When a psychologically disturbed person is set in so small a circle, the undiluted tension and strain, that is imposed upon the remaining few of the family, creates a situation which may become unbearable. There is no strong collective to help the modern melancholic who in a group of eight or ten had a far better chance of finding sympathetic and understanding friends. Now everybody turns away or has no time. Sensitive and difficult, the sick person soon finds himself isolated with his problems, his fears, his neurotic reactions.

A comprehensive survey of the impact of family life on neurotic conditions cannot, of course, be given in a small article. I do not wish to convey the impression that the small family alone is responsible for the cause and maintenance of neurosis, since there are many other contributory factors and neurosis occurs in large families too. But it must be recognized that the influence of the modern small family is an important element. To claim that the obvious solution to this particular aspect of the problem is to increase the family gives no satisfactory answer, for this has been said so often before. It is preached, apparently and unfortunately with no avail, by priests and laymen who are aware of the seriousness of the signs of the present day. It might, of course, be possible to increase the size of the family by adoption or by taking into it friends and acquaintances. This, however, would work only in rare and exceptional circumstances after long periods and, perhaps, many experiments. Besides, G.H., being a practical person, will hardly be satisfied with advice that could work only on a long-term policy of this description. He asks for help here and now. There is a more practical answer but it is also more drastic. Instead of perpetuating a situation in which the whole family suffers and which, in the circumstances, cannot be dealt with in spite of all good intentions, the wise suggestion which has often been followed with great success is separation. This breaking

away is not an admittance of defeat but a facing of facts. The neurotic exists as an outsider in his family unsuited to the environment in which he lives. It is not true that the present-day family, unless it is large and of the older type, is unquestionably the best place for everybody. Natures and temperaments clash, even though they be of the same flesh and blood. It is possible, therefore, that the neurotic will be far better off in another environment. Actually this is a time-honoured solution, for religious orders, when confronted by the problem of a difficult member, have often made use of it by sending the ill-fitting one to another house. A difficult or neurotic person may be a nuisance with one set of people but a blessing with another. But if it is important that a separation should be arranged it is also important that it should be done in the right spirit. Were it done grudgingly as a punishment or as if a great tragedy were taking place, it would, of course, be of very little value. Although no plant, animal or human being can thrive in a soil or climate to which it is not suited, the essential transplanting must be judiciously effected. The wrong climate is not necessarily the family circle. It can be the job, or an irritating neighbour, sometimes the lack of a hobby and some form of artistic expression, or perhaps it is contact with animals that is needed. Even the meteorological climate has to be taken into consideration, since we know of the depressing or elating effect of atmospheric conditions.

To sum up I would say that from the many practical suggestions that have been made in this correspondence G.H. will surely find one or more ways of improving the disturbed family situation. It is important to bear in mind that the right attitude and the right environment are essential factors. There is one point more I would like to bring to the notice of readers. It is that psychology has often been accused of encouraging sentimentality, weakness and indulgence. Nothing can be farther from the truth. Psychology is a new and specific method of education which the neurotic needs. He must feel that he is being guided firmly. Strict handling is necessary but, as Henri de Lubac says, there are 'two ways of being strict: one that is unjust and arises from lack of understanding, and the other is a requirement of love itself; the first increases evil, the second produces good where there was none before.'²

BEING OBJECTIVE ABOUT NEUROSIS

MURDOCH SCOTT, O.P.

IN a recent issue of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* a question of the utmost importance was raised in a letter about neurosis. And among other points that of having an objective view about neurotic illness is worth serious consideration.

In a neurosis there are two factors to be considered: the fundamental disorder of the psychic structure—the unhealthy psychic tensions which are the source of further trouble (the so-called ‘nerves’ of the ‘highly strung’ person)—and the consequent result of this psychic tension in terms of the reaction to life and its problems. The fundamental inner tension is not a single, definite fear of some evil, but rather a general, unspecified fearful attitude. And although this psychic tension is to be found in both introvert and extravert personalities its result in terms of adaptation to the demands of life is different in each type of temperament. The introvert whose psychological constitution is of a generally fearful kind tends to develop an illness which is itself a psychic disorder—depression, anxiety, morbid fear—and so is called a psychological illness. The extravert, on the other hand, usually develops a physical illness—for the long list of which consult the advertisements in the daily press and magazines. Because of their psychic origin (the unhealthy inner tension) these physical (bodily) illnesses are called psychosomatic. The pure introvert and extravert type is of course an abstraction. In reality a person may be predominantly introvert or extravert, but he will nevertheless possess to a greater or less degree the temperamental traits of the other type of personality. Hence where the psychic constitution pre-disposes to a neurosis the introvert will show symptoms of psychosomatic upsets and the extravert will not be free of the psychological disorders.

But although the two factors mentioned above are present in every neurosis, it is the consequent adaptation to the demands of life which determines whether or not a person is suffering from a neurosis. In one type of personality the inadequate adjustment to life takes on an internal—better perhaps, an interior—form, so that the consequent illness is predominantly psychological. It is this kind of illness that is known technically as a neurosis. With the

extravert temperament, however, the consequent adaptation manifests itself in a more outwardly way in a number of bodily disorders. These psychosomatic illnesses are not strictly speaking called neuroses.

Yet it would surely fall short of the truth and give a misleading impression if we were to omit all reference to psychosomatic illnesses for the purely technical reason that they are not in medical language neuroses. Experience shows that the 'neurotic' whose health is his chief preoccupation in life can be more of a trial to other people with his complaints, excuses and demands, than many a true neurotic (in the technical sense) who suffers in silence and does not want to be a bother to anyone.

Thus while observing the recognized distinction and keeping the word 'neurosis' for a predominantly psychological illness, I have nevertheless included the psychosomatic illnesses and taken them as neuroses in a wider, non-technical sense.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that where treatment for neurosis is to be undertaken it must be left to those who are qualified to deal with such troubles. I use the word 'treatment' in the strict and formal sense, because obviously the layman (one not qualified) can help *in his own way* and to that extent he may be said to be assisting in the treatment. Often the help given by the layman will be the only form of 'treatment' possible, either because the sick man refuses to seek expert guidance or because, as in some cases, psychological treatment is inadvisable.

How can the normal, mentally healthy lay person help this neurotic fellow men? One way is by encouraging the sick person to consult a properly qualified authority if that is at all feasible. In a recent book on this subject the authors—a doctor and a priest—made the bald assertion that a person suffering from a neurosis sins if he refuses to have treatment. That is going too far. It is true that we have an obligation to look after our health as far as we can. But some people feel the obligation is best fulfilled by keeping away from doctors as much as possible. That is perhaps a sentiment over-tinged with cynicism; but even so few would deny that at least in a serious illness it would be imprudent and a failure in our duty to refuse medical attention. No doubt in some cases a neurosis is so slight as to be no more than a nuisance and can be coped with; but in most cases it is a serious illness.

In view of the number of lay persons—in this context, people

who are not doctors—engaged in psychotherapeutic work, there is no reason why a priest, trained in psychological matters and with the necessary ‘psychological touch’—an elusive quality—should not be recognized as qualified to treat the neuroses by the methods of depth analysis. I would add one rider to this, namely, that the patient should first have been seen by a medical psychiatrist who alone is competent to diagnose and decide whether a person is likely to benefit from analytical treatment. At the present day very few lay analysts work independently of the medical profession.

We cannot, however, usually hope to persuade the next-door neighbour or those with whom we work to go and have psychological treatment for their neurotic condition; even members of the family and close friends may reject our suggestion with some show of indignation. But clearly it is to their advantage if they go voluntarily out of an awareness that they are ill and need help; if they refuse to have treatment then we must not drive them to it. (Where religious are concerned it would be extremely unwise in most cases for a superior to make it a matter of obedience for any of his subjects to take psychological treatment.)

There is then a more obvious and a more important way in which we can help in the problem of neurosis, and that is by helping to bring about the proper atmosphere and the right relationship in our daily contacts with those who are neurotic. And that means having right ideas and the right attitude to this illness.

There is no need here to elaborate the theological doctrine of the Fall and its consequences. In terms of grace and sin we are sufficiently instructed in the basic principles of the Redemption. We know that we are restored to grace but not to that state of original justice enjoyed by our first parents; we know that we have the seeds of sin in us and can freely fall from grace; we know, in a word, that we are far from perfect. But in terms of the damage done to our psychic structure by original and actual sin—a ‘penalty’ (*poenalitas*) not removed by baptism or penance—we are not so well informed. Yet within the general truth that none of us is completely well adjusted and integrated, it is perfectly valid to distinguish between the mentally healthy and the psychologically sick. What perhaps we fail to realize—by ‘we’ I mean those who are not neurotic—is that *the most sane and*

balanced person can become neurotic for a time in certain given circumstances. The prisoner of war, the man who loses everything, the person asked to carry responsibility beyond his powers, the times of serious or trying illness—these are just a few instances in which psychologically normal men can become temporarily neurotic. More interesting even is the fact that *we can react in a neurotic way towards certain persons.* Who among us has not his *bête noire* whom we would gladly do to death at times? In other words every normal, psychologically sound person has a disposition towards neurosis—some more than others—and at times this potentiality becomes actual, so that in certain circumstances he reacts in exactly the same way as the true neurotic. With the psychologically sick, on the other hand, their neurotic condition is actual most of the time and in nearly every circumstance. If only we were as well informed about our mental allergies as about our physical much unnecessary distress would be avoided. Unfortunately, though we are often made painfully aware of the latter, knowledge of the former is a wisdom to be won only by those who are willing and able to make the adventure into the unknown.

But it might help us towards that wisdom if we cleared our minds of the wrong notions we have of what a neurosis is. We tend to think of neurosis as a clear-cut disease, like scarlet fever for instance, which we either have or have not. But neurosis is essentially *'an inadequate or faulty response to the demands of life, resulting inevitably in some degree of maladjustment to its problems and situations'*. Put in those terms—as *'a question of adjustment of varying degrees of adequacy to the demands of life'*—we can better appreciate the more or less permanent condition of the true neurotic and the temporary condition in times of stress of the normally sound individual. A golfing metaphor is not an inapt analogy here of the gradations in psychic integration: *'Few of us are "scratch" performers, and many of us are double-figure handicaps, but most of us struggle round happily enough, enjoying the game and succeeding in keeping out of the "rabbit" class'*. The average, normal man struggles round happily enough enjoying the game of life; the *'rabbit'* class are the neurotics; the *'scratch'* man is the ideal at which we aim rather than achieve: the well adjusted, deeply rooted, mature personality.

But if few of us are psychologically *'scratch'* men it is

nevertheless to him that we must look. For such a man there is no problem about how to deal with neurotics; he instinctively and spontaneously knows how to handle the situation, and he does so in a way that is acceptable to the sick man. He is loving and obliging without being either obsequious or patronizing. He is firm, but never aggressive or offensive. He does not allow undue familiarity or dependence, but neither does he adopt the aloof and disinterested manner of the philosopher. If he is a dynamic, go-ahead, extravert type—and these traits are not in themselves proof of a well balanced, integrated personality—he does not expect everyone else to be the same; and so too if he is a natural introvert type. In short, he is always mindful of the fact that God made his neighbour not to his image and likeness but to God's own image and likeness. He is not unaware of his weaknesses and faults—no less is he unaware of his good qualities; and he does not blind himself to the fact that in some respects he has a false attitude to life and its problems. On the contrary, he sees himself as he is; and it is not merely an intellectual insight, but a living experience in which he accepts what he sees in a positive spirit far removed from the negative 'putting up with what cannot be avoided'. Thus in consequence his inner, hidden life—what analytical psychologists call his unconscious life with its shadow side—with all its powers of good and evil, comes more under his control, and his ability to adjust himself to the reality and demands of life is enormously increased. His life moves ever forward to its proper end, a continuous process of maturing and perfecting.

In the Christian context the 'scratch' man is best exemplified by the saint who is the sanest, best balanced and most deeply rooted of creatures, for 'holiness is wholeness'. (It is interesting to notice how many of the saints went through a period of neurosis—the word 'neurosis' is of course modern, but the disorder is as old as history.) We cannot, for instance, imagine St Benedict or St Francis at a loss to bring to the troubled souls of the neurotically sick with whom they came into contact the comfort, encouragement and correction that each in his own way needed; and always with the patience and compassion of the Master himself. Charity then has its place in the cure of neurosis; *its part is in fact indispensable*. We must above all be charitable to those who are suffering from neurosis. How can there be any doubt

about this? And yet *we do seem to doubt the wisdom of being charitable*, and wonder if our charity is not perhaps encouraging the neurotic pride and selfishness of those we want to help. We may be quite certain of this: if our actions encourage pride and selfishness in others then our attitude towards them is not that of true charity. It seems paradoxical to suggest that too many of us *try* to be charitable, too few are truly charitable. This is not a difference which springs from our being 'in' or 'out' of grace—in the present context a state of grace is presumed. It is more a matter of lacking the 'feel'¹ for true charity; almost as if we had never allowed grace to penetrate to the depths of our being and touch our emotional life, with the result that the passion we call 'love' is never quite incorporated into the sphere of the supernatural virtue of charity which operates in our will. If it is not straining a distinction we might say that most of us have the *science* of love, few, the *art*.

Trying to be charitable is the way to disaster with most people and certainly with those who are neurotic. For there is none of that naturalness and spontaneity of approach which comes only from a genuine simplicity and sincerity. Moreover the sick neurotic is to a high degree sensitive to our unspoken and even unconscious thought processes; he unerringly picks up the unconscious attitude that we project on to him, an attitude very different perhaps from our conscious frame of mind: 'I give thee thanks, O God, that I am not as this man here; he is proud, I am humble; he is selfish, I am generous; he is weak and unstable, I am strong-willed and decisive'—in a word, 'he is neurotic, I am not'.

The degree to which the maladjusted, neurotically sick man projects his unconscious attitudes is well nigh incredible. All his unconscious fears, anxieties, suspicions, jealousies, hates, frustrations, prejudices, and the rest are unconsciously transferred to other people. His good qualities are projected in the same way, but with the evil result that he expects other people to act and think as he does and gets annoyed when he finds that they do not. One obvious result of this process of projection is that it creates an atmosphere of tension which heightens in proportion to our own degree of maladjustment. If it is true that it takes two to make a fight, it also takes two to bring about an uneasy, nerve-

1. As Florida Scott-Maxwell has said, true feeling is not a hot, blind 'emotion', fed from unknown sources, but is as trustworthy as clear thought, assesses value justly, and so keeps a living relationship to experience.

racking and exhausting tension. Whenever we find ourselves saying of someone that he 'makes my blood boil', 'makes me sick', 'gets on my nerves', 'sucks me dry' and such like—and in these cases there is nearly always present the appropriate somatic symptom—then we may be sure that we ourselves are contributing in some measure to the unhappy situation by the projection of our own unconscious character traits. The inevitable emotional entanglement in the given set-up is the fruitful source of misunderstandings and bad feelings.

That the neurotic person—and the normal man when on occasion he reacts in a neurotic way—unwittingly (because unconsciously) helps to create the unbearable situation in which he finds himself should be clear when we consider what in fact happens in this process of projection of the unconscious. Very briefly, he is confronted on the conscious level in certain people and in given circumstances with his own shadow side, that part of himself which for a number of reasons (the basic one is fear) has slipped below the threshold of his conscious, waking existence into the unconscious, hidden regions of his being, or which perhaps he has never allowed to surface and use in the conscious stream of life. But he keeps his shadow side away from the light of day only at great cost to himself and others. There must be a constant surveillance, a relentless, tyrannical repression, and a wasteful mustering of most of his psychic energies to the duty of warder in his inner concentration camp. Yet with all his watchfulness and iron-willed mastery of himself he is constantly being surprised, caught out, and overwhelmed by the power he thought he had safely repressed—'I don't know what came over me this morning'; 'that wasn't like me at all'; 'I don't know what possessed me to do such a thing'; not to mention the moods, depressions, fits of temper, petty acts of vindictiveness and much else. And things are not made any easier by the fact that he manages with uncanny ease to find what he considers a perfectly legitimate reason—usually of a high moral tone—for his behaviour.

Although we are conditioned by our antecedent history we are not fatalistically determined by it. Hence there is no call to a morbid reflection on the past or a despairing denial of free will and responsibility. It is a mistake to advise anyone to 'forget it' and pick up the threads again '*as if nothing had happened*'. The business of growing up psychologically means accepting our

background and past history in a positive spirit, recognizing that we are moulded in a certain way, and adjusting ourselves accordingly.

We must try to be more aware of any degree of maladjustment in our own normal and healthy psychic structure, and do our first missionary work there. This does not mean that we are to blind ourselves to what is objectively true any more than charity obliges us to call black white. If a certain person with whom we live is neurotic, a particular act unjust, a suggestion quite impracticable, then we accept the facts. But the more grown-up we are psychologically the less likely we are to become emotionally involved in the given situation. And any neurotic person with whom we have dealings will at once sense our inner calm and impartiality and recognize the simplicity and sincerity of one who having begun to master himself in the right way can help him do the same.

Without then in any sense wishing to set at nought the very real hardships involved in having to live with a neurotic person—especially within a small circle—it is nevertheless true that we ourselves not infrequently help to worsen matters. We have already seen how: because of our blindness to the potentialities inherent in every normal psychic structure to react in a truly neurotic way in given circumstances, we are not always sufficiently objective to avoid being drawn into the whirlpool of emotions inevitably released whenever a 'scene' takes place. But there is a further stage in this process of taking an objective view of neurosis, and that is concerned with our attitude to neurotic people and their needs. Here, too, we often fail badly. There are two points worth consideration: the weak will of the neurotic person, and the psychosomatic illnesses these people often develop.

How often do we not get annoyed when some neurotic friend refuses to take our advice? We complain that he is lazy and weak-willed, and does not really want to get better. Now apart from the fact that our 'advice' is usually nothing more than a stern injunction to him—'pull yourself together and stop behaving like a child'—it is clear from our hurt attitude that we are ignorant of a supremely important factor in neurosis. *Though neurotic people may recognize the validity of the advice we give them they cannot easily follow it. And the reason for this is that their distorted*

attitude towards life and its problems is not so much a matter of intellectual ignorance or bad will; it is rather an emotional blindness which springs from inner, unconscious drives.

This is not the place to discuss the relationship between what are known simply as the 'higher' and the 'lower' parts of our human nature. But briefly we can say that the emotional powers in man are partly autonomous and partly under the control of his intellectual powers. Yet because of sin it is seldom easy to act with good will and in accordance with right reason. 'I am delighted with the law of God according to the inward man; but I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind and captivating me in the law of sin that is in my members'. But as St Paul goes on to tell us: 'Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, by Jesus Christ our Lord.' By the help of grace the normal, psychologically healthy man can control and use his emotional and unconscious drives. On the psychological plane—abstracting from the moral issues—the control exercised by the will, if it is to be healthy, must be benign. This does not mean that it need not be firm; but it must not be dictatorial. The lower part of us brooks no tyranny from the will, and will never lie quiet under that dictatorship; still less will our hidden unconscious psychic forces.

In the neurotic personality the disharmony in the psychic structure is much greater than in a normal personality. (Whether the psychic system of the neurotic differs in degree only or in kind from that of the psychologically healthy is a matter for the experts to settle, if indeed they ever will, since both opinions claim their authorities.) Neurosis is in most cases more than a matter of a slightly inadequate articulation of the unconscious, emotional drives, and the conscious, rational drives. On the contrary, it is almost as if these two parts of the one psychic system operated as more or less independent systems. And the result, paradoxically enough, is that the neurotic, although seldom natural and spontaneous in his reactions, is controlled more by his unconscious drives than by his intellect and will which are too often swamped in the sea of the irrational. It is true that in isolated instances—usually in times of great urgency—a neurotic can bestir himself and control his irrational drives; but he cannot maintain this as the order of the day.

A cure of neurosis is then not a matter of a few weeks treatment. The task of the psychotherapist, usually through a long, analytical process, is to achieve closer articulation of the rational and the irrational forces in the human psyche; to bring about in fact such an approximation that the unconscious and emotional life of the patient comes more under the sway of his intellect and will. In this way the patient is enabled to use the riches of the emotional side of his nature for the living of a fuller and happier life. When he tried to repress and deny the forces of his lower and unconscious life he was in fact dominated by them, with the result that his reaction to life was always inconstant and highly emotional; when he learns to incorporate these powers into his conscious life under the rightful control of the will, he becomes more stable and much less emotional. But the process of transformation and reorientation is long—even when the actual analytical treatment is not prolonged—because it demands a living experience of the realities involved; it is no mere intellectual grasp of high-sounding words like ‘unconscious’, ‘shadow’, ‘anima’ and ‘animus’ which any *Pelican* reader can achieve at small cost. It is then a mistaken and pernicious, though common, opinion that psychological treatment is not concerned to strengthen the weak and vacillating will of the neurotic. A disciplining of the will is an integral part of the cure, but to insist on the exercise of will power independently of tackling the inner, unconscious drives is to court disaster. A similar and equally false conviction is that the psychologist denies the reality of sin and wants to substitute for it the notion of illness. But one might just as well argue that the judge wishes to replace the notion of sin by the concept of legality. In the sphere of human action ‘sin’ says something more than ‘lack of rectitude’ and the psychologist *as such* is rightly not concerned with the wider concept of sin.

We come now to the question of psychosomatic illnesses. To repeat what was said in the beginning, these may be either the attendant physical disorders of a neurosis (although strictly speaking neurosis being a psychological illness has no pathology as such), or the symptoms of the ‘neurotic’ extravert personality. The first thing to be clear about is that psychosomatic illnesses are *real*—in some cases they may be organic. A responsible Catholic medical psychologist has said in blunt terms that in no circumstances are we entitled to say or even think that those who

suffer from neurotic disorders (and that includes the psychosomatic illnesses) are frauds and malingerers. If only we could be convinced about this and see the disorders of a neurosis as every bit as real as a fractured leg a great deal of harm and unhappiness would be avoided. We do not usually find it difficult to put up with the tantrums of someone who is seriously ill from a purely organic disorder; we make every allowance for his condition. We make no allowance for and are seldom tolerant of neurotics because too often we think of them even if we do not speak of them as bogus—'There's nothing the matter with him, it's just his imagination.'

But it is not only unjust to dismiss psychosomatic disorders as so much bogus illness, it is also foolish in the extreme. *For they have an objective and valuable role to play in the cure of neurosis.* There are some people whose unconscious and emotional life is so powerful that they must *severely* repress it through the exercise of a strongly disciplined will; and thus although there is a certain loss to them of fulness of personality there is a gain in that they are spared the greater loss which would result from the inevitable neurosis which would follow a swamping of their conscious life. It is exactly the same with psychosomatic illnesses: they are in fact a 'cure' for what would be a much worse neurosis.

It is then not advisable to seek a cure for neurosis (or psychosomatic illnesses) *at all costs*. It would be ironical—as has happened—if we were to cure the illness, expose the person to the rigours of a world with which he cannot cope, with no honourable escape, and thereby increase his misery and worsen his neurosis.

To anyone looking for a Psychological Decalogue what has been said here must be a disappointment. There are no rules or norms on how to deal with neurotic people. Life is much more than a matter of applying a series of rules. What we should be seeking for is wisdom in the fullest sense of that word, the Gift of the Holy Ghost. For ultimately the holier we are the more whole we are—to quote Father Goldbrunner—and so the more able to help neurotic people spontaneously and with a 'natural' wisdom.

But we might perhaps allow ourselves one rule of thumb. If a person *enjoys* bad health or *loves* to grumble and complain, then let him be; it is almost certainly a remedy for a neurotic condition that would be otherwise unbearable.

ST TERESA OF LISIEUX

AND HER 'TRULY EXCESSIVE SENSITIVENESS'

ETIENNE ROBO

IN her autobiography, St Teresa of Lisieux has entered accurately, sometimes forcibly, a number of her peculiarities of disposition and character. They are so striking that no attentive reader can miss them. Most of her biographers however explain them away without realizing their true significance or dismiss them as of being of no importance. One well-known Teresian, for instance, speaks of St Teresa's 'truly excessive sensitiveness' and leaves it at that. 'Excessive' is the right word, 'sensitiveness' is not, and we believe that after considering the facts of the case, we shall come to the conclusion that this 'sensitive-ness' of St Teresa has a medical signification and deserves another name. Why should we be reticent about any element of her personality? Every saint must build up his sanctity with the materials at hand, with, or in spite of, his temperament and constitution, his physical and mental gifts or deficiencies.

Taken one by one, the idiosyncrasies of St Teresa may seem obscure. Take them together and you soon perceive a logical link between them all. They are in fact extremely important since her personality is inexplicable unless you give them due consideration.

Without entering into many details let us run over some of the peculiarities we have in mind. Teresa tells us that after her mother's death (she was then four and a half) she became a different child, reserved, timid, inclined to weep without any cause, simply perhaps because someone had looked at her. She enjoyed melancholy at six and later on she wrote with evident relish of her moods of poetical (and, as the thought, religious) sadness. Five years later her sister Pauline, who had taken her mother's place, entered Carmel—a loss as unexpected as it was 'far in excess of her strength'. A serious nervous breakdown followed: headaches first, then shiverings, fits of catalepsy, hallucinations, delusions. She thought they were trying to poison her, and in the end failed to recognize her sister Marie who had nursed her for many weeks during her breakdown. The hydropathic treatment and the drugs of Dr Notta had no success and she recovered her health

suddenly through 'a vision'. She saw her statue of the Blessed Virgin in her bedroom come to life and smile to her.

Her propensity to tears continued; her headaches persisted; she was sent to school where she proved an intellectually precocious child, quick of understanding, imaginative and fond of study. She was not, however, a good mixer and could not make friends; during recreation time, instead of joining in the games, she kept away from the other girls, mooning, reading or 'giving honourable burial' to little dead birds. At home, on holidays, she would retire to her room, hide herself behind the curtains of her bed and think of eternity.

When she was about twelve she fell a prey to scruples. This is a state of anxiety which makes the patient worry about absurd trifles and is not amenable to reason since it is a mental trouble. It was a very painful trial and she herself remarked: 'One must have passed through such a martyrdom to be able to understand it!' Teresa says it lasted two years. She thought so, but the advice given her by Père Pichon three years later, in 1888, and that of another confessor, Père Alexis Prou, in 1891 appears to be what a competent confessor would say to a scrupulous patient.

In her autobiography she tells us here and there of black moods, of days of deep distress which have no adequate cause or even no cause at all. A typical example of this can be read in Mgr Thomas Taylor's *Saint Thérèse de Lisieux*, page 96. Her uncle had disagreed with her and thought—very sensibly—that she was too young at fifteen to enter the convent. Read the whole page. . . . 'A three days martyrdom . . . lost in a frightful desert . . . stormy waters, darkness, lightning. . . . All round was night, dark night, utter desolation, death!', and she adds that 'the heavens wept with her'.

At Christmas in 1886 occurs what she calls her conversion and she claims that from that day onwards 'the fountain of her tears was dried up'. She certainly began to fight against her propensity to tears, but not always successfully, for we find her weeping copiously on quite a few occasions the following year. For instance when, accompanied by her father, she called on the Bishop of Bayeux, not only did she weep during the interview, but when the Vicar General opened the door to them, he found Teresa in tears on the doorstep. This surely indicates a certain nervous weakness.

Her last and greatest trial was that of religious doubt. During the last fifteen months of her life, and indeed up to her last day on earth, she was haunted by the intolerable fear that God did not love her, that she would never see him, for there was no such place as Heaven, no such thing as an after life. This was not intellectual doubt, for she herself wrote that she could not give any explanation of it; it was an obsession. Like her scruples, like the state of wretchedness she had so often experienced, like her delirious wanderings (the precipice, the threatening black fingers) during her nervous breakdown when she was ten years old, these doubts were a mental disturbance, a nightmare, not a real temptation. Her absolute trust in God, as well as the horror these thoughts inspired her, caused her to reject them with all her will and as she said herself: 'In all my life I have never made so many acts of faith as during these last months.'

Within the limits of an article we cannot enter into any more details. We have directed the reader's attention to enough abnormal characteristics of St Teresa—none of which can be questioned since they rest on her own testimony—for him to draw an obvious conclusion: St Teresa was a 'nervous subject'; she may be called a neuropath; she suffered from psycho-neurosis. It is no disparagement to say this. Most general medical practitioners will agree that seventy-five per cent of their patients are 'nervous' people, suffering from functional diseases, and that most of them are recruited among the highly organized, conscientious people, not among the mental incompetents. St Teresa shared her disability with that section of humanity which has given the world most of its thinkers, artists, poets, musicians and, we can add, many of its saints.



A careful reading of the *Story of a Soul* reveals the not unexpected conclusion that in fact St Teresa used these peculiarities of temperament as the means to rise to holiness. From December 1888 onwards she fought her propensity to tears, at least in so far as they were a manifestation of selfishness. She fought her scruples and was even under the impression that two years had been enough for her to conquer them. Unlike most victims of scruples who, over-strict in one or two directions, are astonishingly lax in others, we find her in Carmel as strict in observing the

minute rules of the convent as the wider precepts of the Gospel. Her moods of depression were to her a very painful trial and she spoke longingly of heaven 'where there will be no black moods'; yet, unlike the common run of neurotics, who inflict on everyone within reach the tale of their imaginary complaints and the intolerable burden of their melancholy, St Teresa kept an unbroken silence over her mental trials and invariably had a radiant smile for everyone. So much was every one deceived by her cheerful manner that when, a short while before her death, she referred to her past life as one of bitter suffering, no one understood what she meant.

We find her at her greatest during the last year of her life when she was obsessed by religious doubts and 'her mind dwelt in darkness'. The victims of such obsessions as these seem generally to accept them as representing the truth and fail to see them as the nightmare they are. They are incapable of dissociating these phantasms from themselves and lose the power to resist and fight them. Not so St Teresa. Her mind and heart were so firmly anchored in faith and in absolute trust in God that her doubts were never accepted by her. They remained outside her soul, besiegers of a citadel that never opened its gates to them. It seems to us that this long continued fight against doubt did in fact set the final seal on her sanctity and her greatness. In our book, *Two Portraits of St Teresa*, we incorporated this interpretation in the story of her last day on earth.



We believe it is possible to form a well-founded opinion of the nature of St Teresa's neurosis by an examination of its manifestations as the saint described them in her autobiography. To arrive at the cause, it is often enough to examine the effects. After her mother's death, the character of Teresa underwent a complete change, and surely her new timidity, her easy and frequent tears cannot be interpreted as signs of happiness or holiness, but rather as symptoms of insecurity and fear. After the departure of Pauline, her second mother, to the convent, occurred the illness we have already described. Many of its symptoms have a common character: the precipice by the side of her bed, the conviction she is being poisoned, the threatening black fingers on the wall, etc., clearly indicate a state of fear, a feeling of insecurity. Later on,

when she will not recognize her sister Marie who has tenderly looked after her throughout her illness, what does it mean, except that Marie who has played the part of a mother, is not her mother? She feels herself to be motherless; no one cares for her, no one stands between her and outside dangers. It is only when she knows she need fear no more because the Blessed Virgin has smiled to her and has taken her under her protection, that she recovers. She has at last found security, and she recovers at once.

Her scruples, what are they but another manifestation of that deep-seated fear that was part of herself? Without any cause, she believed that she had offended God deeply, that her soul was in danger; up to the end of her life she needed constant reassurance that God loved her. The only two confessors she approved of and named in her *Story of a Soul*, are those who assured her with great emphasis that all was well with her: 'Before God, the Blessed Virgin, the angels and all the saints, I declare that you have never committed a mortal sin' (Père Pichon); 'On behalf of Almighty God, I assure you he is well pleased with your soul' (Père Prou). For a while, Teresa found peace of mind after these declarations, because their words were the very antidote she needed against fear.

On the other hand, if during a retreat the preacher spoke of the justice and judgments of God, of sin and punishment, and suggested it was possible for a nun to offend God mortally, his sermon left Teresa agitated and perturbed to an extraordinary degree. We have this from her own sister, Pauline, who wrote: 'During one of those retreats I was serving in the refectory and I was struck by the anguished expression on her face. She could not eat. I asked her later on what it was and she confided to me that the discourses of the retreat were the cause of it. I believe she would have died had the retreat lasted much longer.'

Two of the dreams related by St Teresa in her autobiography tell us the same story of fear and need of reassurance. In the first one which occurred soon after the death of Mother Geneviève, foundress of the Carmel of Lisieux, she saw this saintly woman distributing all her belongings to the Sisters. 'When my turn came, her hands were empty, and I feared I was not to receive anything, but she looked at me lovingly and repeated three times: "To you I leave my heart", and thus after all Teresa received the best gift of all.'

The same tale of fear and encouragement is the theme of her second dream. To the three Carmelites who appear to her—one of them the foundress of Carmel in France—Teresa asks the question that was all the time at the back of her mind: Does God want anything more from me? Is he pleased with me? and Mother Anne de Jesus answered: 'God asks nothing more from you; he is pleased, very much pleased.'

By the way, we should note the directness of the dreams of St Teresa. Like the dreams of children, hers contain hardly anything that could be called symbols. One finds in them a direct, and clearly expressed, wish and an equally direct answer.

She was never free from those exaggerated feelings of insecurity even during her last illness, even at the very time when they attribute to her definite pronouncements about her own sanctity and future canonization. To the end she was haunted by terrible doubts about her salvation and about the existence of heaven. One night a few weeks before her death she was seized with a terrible feeling of anguish. She told her sister: 'I was lost in darkness from out of which came an accursed voice. "Are you certain that God loves you? Has he come to tell you so himself? The opinion of a few creatures will not justify you in his sight."'

These points taken together seem to us conclusive and it would be difficult not to draw the inference that at the root of St Teresa's neurosis is a feeling of insecurity. Can we go further and attempt to reach the earliest cause and beginnings of it? We believe that heredity is often responsible for a natural predisposition to 'nervous' troubles, but do we know enough of St Teresa's ancestry to form a well-founded opinion? It may be also that after spending the first eighteen months of her life in the country under the loving care of a foster-mother whom she had accepted as her real one, her return home was to her like starting a new life among strangers. How did she accept the change? We have it from Mrs Martin that in May and April when Teresa was taken home for her first short visits 'she cried until they thought she would swoon away', and that on each succeeding visit 'she cried and only at the sight of her nurse would she stop and smile'. What were her reactions when finally, after eighteen months, she had to exchange open-air life in the country for the confined rooms of a town house, and her beloved foster-mother for people she no longer knew? How long did it take for her to take root in these new

surroundings? We should not be justified in drawing definite conclusions in the absence of precise information.

To the praise of St Teresa, let us point out that a weakness which is usually a life-long handicap was conquered by her as far as one can conquer an incurable infirmity, and that she made an unexpected use of it as the means of reaching sanctity.



A TECHNIQUE OF SPIRITUAL LIBERATION (II)

P.-R. RÉGAMEY

III

THREE MAJOR DEMANDS OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

THREE admitted facts of our actual times impose themselves on us more imperiously than the rest.

First is this need for experience which we touched on towards the beginning of this article. We have said that it needs to be kept within legitimate limits. Then everyone will take care not to be satisfied with notions which have no spiritual value, any more than with observances which are followed because they are prescribed or recommended but which are, in consequence, burdens: they must become the means of liberation. The actions of the clergy and of the faithful, the functioning of institutions should lead to an increasing experience of *lucidity, coherence, control and peace*. Every spiritual man knows, with an immediate intuitive certainty, that these are normally the criteria of an authentic spiritual experience. Let us put it that in other times one could leave the 'spiritual senses' in penance to the extent of opposing the *effective* and the *affective*, and imagining a charity which was not *affective*; today there could no longer be a question of living the Christian life without a certain sense of its success—success in its own order, which is, let us repeat, that of faith and hope, but which must no less, normally, be 'palpable to the heart'. In this we certainly are not going as far as the ancients, so simple in their savouring of experience, the Greek Fathers for instance, St Gregory the Great and all the medievals of the West.

The second of the important facts which concern our purpose is

that we live, in every respect, in a time of *inflation*. Our notions, acquired in a theoretical, precocious, uncritical fashion, are formidably swollen by comparison with our *real* knowledge; they are full of contradictions and pose us with a crowd of disturbing riddles. Attractions multiply on all sides to excite as many contradictory desires. Our circumstances carry responsibilities which we are not able to fulfil, duties which we cannot even measure, although we surmise them in a more or less anxious way. The overwhelming onslaught of impressions precipitated upon us wears us out. The activity of our reason, getting more and more abstract, dissociates itself from a sensibility getting more and more desiccated (and also more and more sensual and subject to the passions). It is indispensable that we should put our elementary activities together again in a correct way, and that is to say especially that we should reharmonize ourselves with the rhythms of the universe. Men's occupations in other times used to conform so well to these rhythms that they had for the majority a spontaneous *initiatory* efficaciousness. The artificial character of modern life obliges us to give too great importance to the exercises one performs in one's spare time. Sport is in this sense a reaction to the artificiality of our life. It is not enough; there is another reaction necessary, that of a more contemplative orientation, which must open us again to certain lived clarities, to certain modes of being, at once very humble and of incalculable compass and import. Thanks to them we shall, as St Francis de Sales said, *live life itself well*, which will always be the most important exercise. Three words, tentative and approximate as they are, touch perhaps less inadequately than most on the reality which we must learn again to experience: they are interior *density*, interior *dimension* and *rhythm*. Let us try to find what modes of behaviour will reconstitute us in such a way that we preserve ourselves better from inflationary devaluation, in our judgment, our desires, our actions, so that we disguise less under an abundance of compensatory tokens the lack of *substance*.

For it is a question of having complete integrity for the task which is imposed on us, that of confronting the third of the major demands which the world of today makes—and makes brutally—upon the spiritual man. This is the obligation to acquire the famous '*supplément d'âme*', the reinforcement of soul, which Bergson used to talk about, to contribute towards giving it to

the world. Many of our contemporaries are in search of it in their speculations, and it is most certainly essential, indeed fundamental; they are asking themselves what duties the world which is coming into being imposes on man, into what actions in every order (scientific, economic, social, political) the challenge of his destiny should be translated. Still, *seriousness* is tragically lacking in all this. The fact that ideologies, collective passions and routines are more powerful than manifest realities leaves room for fear that men are travelling towards suicide, madness and other forms of disintegration rather than towards a higher mode of life. They do not want to *see what they see*. When, for instance, they envisage the eventuality of total war, or when the French fail to reform the educational, administrative, political and social system which is obviously leading them to disaster, we may despair of men and their future. All the more reason for each one of us to fill in the chinks in his armour, to remake the texture of his mind. It is in all orders at the same time, and according to the extent of each individual's and each community's power—according to each man's and each woman's capacity—that the work must be carried out, stimulated by the necessity 'to live more fully in order to live at all', and by the hope that, in becoming more alive ourselves, we may bring it about that our fellow-men, in their turn, become more alive.

In the inflation of theoretical studies, of inquiries without any vital response, of discussions which are liquidated by the triumph of vested interests, the advance which is least considered is the setting free of the real personality, the opening of the heart. The man of today has very rarely any other line than that of practical action or that of science or intellectual speculation. He needs the '*supplément d'âme*' as an individual as well as in the use of the formidable powers with which he is equipped. But, first of all, it is necessary that the spiritual man should advance *in his own life*, which is that of the 'heart', giving consistency there to the evangelical beatitudes. They are the '*supplément d'âme*'. How then is one to dispose oneself best for their successful activity, in the interior life and in one's contacts with other people? Not at the level of verbal and fanciful considerations, but in the reality of the living person, body and mind and 'heart', 'heart' fulfilling itself certainly in clear and distinct ideas and in affections, but first, and always, in the deep, simple life which is indissolubly attention and

love. The techniques of mental and spiritual liberation, which are to be found in men's traditional heritage, and also depth-psychology, have certainly a great deal to teach us in this direction. If ever there was a case when it was necessary to 'tend to the truth with one's whole soul', and indeed with one's body too, this is it. It needs a total seriousness, and what we generally do, we folk who apply ourselves to the life of the spirit, is, frankly, lacking in seriousness. Far from engaging in generous action towards definite ends, we float about in near misses and inconsistencies. How shall we *compose* ourselves best, in order to *construct* ourselves?

'Live more fully'? Many dream of the possibility for men of higher states of consciousness. And after all why should certain disciplines not set free in us spiritual energies more or less inhibited which would be able to face, *holily*, the formidable demands of the world which is coming into being? In any case, whether or not this is a vain Utopia, Christians must reopen their 'hearts', reawake their minds, conform to the beatitudes even the behaviour of their bodies. If humanity did arrive in certain privileged persons at a higher mode of consciousness, there would be necessary a general climate much more really that of the Gospels. If, on the other hand, it is not to advance in this way, the virtues, put as they are to greater proof than in easier times, must be developed under a surer régime, a régime of the 'heart' and the mind and the body. Here we must grope humbly, being satisfied at first with the most elementary things, forcing nothing. One does not tug at the ears of corn to make them grow more quickly. But we must cultivate the fields. At the moment, they are, in general, lying fallow.

And let us not forget that every effort must tend towards men's spiritual unity—not, to be sure, in syncretism or by contamination, but by an advance towards the fulness which is in Christ. 'To renew all things in Christ' (Eph. 1, 10) implies that Christians, 'entering by their fulness into all the fulness of God' (Eph. 3, 19), should strive towards a prophetic advent, a coming in their own hearts of all they wish to see accomplished according to Christ. How will those who do not know that Christ has come for their salvation reach a *real* knowledge of this mystery if they do not find in us Christians partners in whom their genuine aspirations and legitimate certainties are already fulfilled in a

surpassing Christian form? Conversation has scarcely opened with the Far East; we must, to be sure, remain in it men of clear thought and entire faith, but no true understanding will be possible unless we rediscover, restoring them in some measure in our own lives, the intuitive values which have been sterilized in the West during recent centuries, the sense of certain spiritual realities attested even in experience, without which man appears to the Oriental to be looking backwards. At the same time, also, we shall be able to become partners again with the Christian East, where these realities have remained more alive than with us.

This is the immense labour of the new man, in the Gospel's sense, the man who is growing to the stature of the world of tomorrow. To *understand* infinitely more things, and infinitely greater things, to love more widely, to put into operation more redoubtable powers, to confront perhaps a mad society, this will not be all: it is going to be a necessity for spiritual energy to be set free in us, to be disciplined and to become effective.



THE NATURE OF ACCIDIE (II)¹

JOHN CASSIAN (A.D. 360-448)

MANUAL LABOUR AS A REMEDY

TO THE embers of such faults, then, he now hastens to apply a suitable remedy, and laying aside the apostolic power which he recently called into play, he turns once more to speak with the heart of a kind father or a gentle physician, and, as speaking to his children or his patients, he presents the medicine of health with words of salutary counsel, on this wise: 'Them that are such, we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus that with quietness they work and eat their own bread' (2 Thess. 3, 12). He has cured with the one salutary precept of work the causes of such terrible sores which spring from the root of idleness, in the manner of some most skilled physician, and he knows also that the rest of the ailments which sprout up from the same soil will straightway vanish away, when once the primordial disease has been destroyed.

¹ Cf: the November issue of THE LIFE, page 189.

THE SPIRIT OF DEJECTION

If gnawing sadness once gain, by individual attacks, or in different and unseen ways, a power of mastery over our souls, it separates us ever and always from any insight of divine contemplation, and casting down the mind from whatever of purity it might possess, entirely overthrows and depresses it. It allows us not to fulfil our prayers with wonted readiness of heart, nor to give our attention to the remedy that is found in reading Holy Writ. It suffers us not to be at peace, and mild with the brethren. It makes us restless and irritable for all the duties of our work, or our worship. All salutary counsel is lost, and the heart's constancy overthrown. It makes a man as if bereft of his senses, or the victim of intoxication—broken and overwhelmed with guilty despair.

Wherefore, if we desire to contend well in these spiritual contests, we must try to cure this disease of sadness also, with no less care than the others. For 'as a moth doth by a garment, and a worm by the wood, so the sadness of a man consumeth the heart'. (Prov. 25, 20 LXX.)

For a garment spoiled by moths is no longer of any value, and can be put to no further use; and a piece of timber likewise, which has been furrowed by worms, cannot serve to adorn even a modest building, and is good only to be burned in the fire. So also a soul devoured by gnawing sadness will be useless either for that priestly robe which, as David in prophecy informs us, is wont to receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit coming down from heaven, first on Aaron's beard and then on his skirts.

ITS CAUSE

Sometimes this fault is wont to follow upon the sin of anger, or to arise from some desire unfulfilled, or from some gain not attained to, when a man sees some hope decay which he had entertained in his heart. Sometimes, again, when no previous cause can be found which might impel us to this defect, goaded by our subtle enemy, we are oppressed suddenly with such a degree of sorrowfulness that we are unable to greet our dearest and nearest, when they come to us, with ordinary courtesy. Whatever they may say to us in easy conversation seems to us all needless and out of place; we refuse to make them any kind reply: the gall of bitterness invades the recesses of our hearts.

Hence it is very clearly proved that it is not always the faults of others that goad us to trouble of heart. It is rather our own faults—we who have in ourselves the causes of offence and the seed-plots of sin, which, when our minds are watered with the showers of temptations, are ready immediately to spring up, and grow, and bear fruit.

For never is a man forced into sin by another's fault, unless he have, stowed away in his heart, matter for evil deeds. Nor is a man to be held a victim of sudden deception if at the sight of a woman's beauty he fall into an abyss of vile lust. Rather is it that diseases of soul, deeply hidden away and lost to view, come then to the surface on the occasion of the sight.

And therefore God, the Creator of all, caring above everything for the restoration of his handiworks, and knowing that the root and cause of offences lie not in others but in our own selves, had bade us not to separate ourselves from consort with the brethren, nor to avoid those whom we think that we have injured or that they have injured us, but rather to soothe their feelings, knowing that a perfect heart is acquired not by drawing apart from men, but by the virtue of patience. This virtue, when it is firmly held, will make us to hold to the love of peace even with them that hate peace, and when we possess it not, our lack thereof makes us constantly at enmity with those who may be perfect and higher in virtue than we. For it needs must be that, in the course of human intercourse, occasions of perturbation will arise which will make us hurry to quit the company of those to whom we are bound, and for this reason, when we leave one set of companions for another, we are not ridding ourselves of causes of sadness, but only changing them.

A threefold reason is assigned for barrenness of mind. It is the result either of our own carelessness, or of the assault of the devil, or else it is a thing permitted by our Lord to try us. It arises from our own carelessness when, by our own fault and previous coldness, we behave not ourselves circumspectly, and slackness gains on us, and our cowardly sloth allows us to feed on poisonous thoughts so that we make the ground of our heart the seedbed of thorns and thistles. As they grow up there, we become barren and bare of all spiritual fruit and contemplation. The assault of the devil is its cause, when, with cunning craftiness, that adversary of ours sometimes penetrates our minds even when we are busied

in good pursuits, and we are drawn away from our best endeavours unwittingly and unwillingly.

WHY GOD PERMITS IT

Of God's permission and trial of us, however, there is a double cause. The first is that for a brief space we may be forsaken by the Lord, and thus behold with humility the infirmity of our minds, and may be in no wise puffed up on account of the purity of heart which we possessed before, and which had been given to us by God's visitation, and that we may learn by experience that when we are forsaken of him we cannot by any groanings or efforts of our own win back the pristine state of gladness and purity, and may know that the brightness of heart which we have lost had not been bestowed upon us by our own work but by his favour, and that now we must seek it again of his grace and enlightenment. The second cause of trial is that the constancy of our minds and our perseverance and desire may be tested, and that it may be made manifest in us with what intention of heart, what instance of prayer, we beseech the return of the Holy Spirit who has left us, and that when we know with how great toil that spiritual joy and gladness of purity must be regained, we may the more carefully endeavour to keep it when we have found it, and hold it the closer.

WHEN DEJECTION IS ALONE VALUABLE

In only one event must we reckon that sadness is profitable to us, namely, when we entertain it either from penitence for our sins, or fired by desire for perfection, or at the contemplation of future bliss. Of this the blessed Apostle speaks when he says: 'Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret; but the sorrow the world worketh death' (2 Cor. 7, 10).

To such degree did the blessed David realize that this departure—and if I may call it so—desertion by God, was advantageous, that he never cared to pray, not that he should at any time be entirely forsaken by God—for that, he knew, was not to the good either of himself or of any human being who had set out towards any sort of perfection—but he preferred to ask that such desertion might be tempered, as when he said: 'Forsake me not utterly' (Ps. 119, 8), as much as to say, in other words, 'I know that for their good thou art wont to forsake thy holy ones that thou mayest

try them.' For they could not be tried by the adversary except they were for a brief space forsaken by thee. Therefore, I do not ask that thou shouldest never forsake me for it is not good for me either that I should not feel my weakness and be made to say, 'It is good for me that thou hast chastened me', or that I should never have experience of conflict. And this, without doubt, I cannot have if the divine protection clings to me always and without intermission . . . I rather pray that thou shouldest not 'utterly' forsake me—that is to say, even to excess. For in so far as it is advantageous to me that thou doest a little withdraw thyself from me that the constancy of my desire may be proved, so also is it to my hurt if thou dost suffer me for my evil deserts and my sin's sake to be too far forsaken.

HOW TO TEST AND ABOLISH IT

That sadness which 'worketh repentance unto sure salvation' is obedient, courteous, humble, kind, gentle, and patient—coming down, as it does, from the love of God. It reaches out tirelessly to every kind of bodily pain and contrition of spirit in its desire after perfection, and, in a way rejoicing and buoyed up with the hope of spiritual progress, it keeps entire its graces of gentleness and long-suffering, having within it all those fruits of the Holy Ghost which the Apostle enumerates when he says: 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance' (Gal. 5, 22-23). The other kind of sadness, on the contrary, is most bitter, impatient, hard, filled with resentment and unfruitful grief and wicked despair. It calls off and breaks away whomsoever it has taken hold upon from diligence and godly sorrow, for it is opposed to reason, and impedes not only the efficacy of prayer, but also makes of none effect all the above enumerated fruits of the Spirit, which godly sorrow can call forth.

For these reasons every kind of sadness, save that which we embrace for the sake of salutary penitence or zeal for perfection or longing after future bliss, we must drive away from us, as being of this world and productive of death, and we must root it out of our hearts just as much as the spirit of fornication or avarice or wrath.

Now we shall be able to drive this most deadly passion out of our minds just in the degree that we keep them constantly

occupied with spiritual meditation, and raise them up in hope and contemplation of our promised future bliss. In this way we shall be enabled to overcome all sorts and kinds of sadness—that which comes upon us as a result of previous anger, or from loss of our goods and damage we have suffered, or from injuries done to us, or what again comes upon us from unreasonable disturbance of mind, or that which brings us to deadly despair.

DEJECTION AS A RESULT OF LUKEWARMNESS

According to what we read in Scripture, there are three conditions of soul: the first carnal, the second natural, and the third spiritual. They are described as follows, in the writings of the Apostle: 'I fed you', he says, speaking of the carnal state, 'with milk and not with meat, for ye were not yet able to bear it' (I Cor. 3, 2, 3). And again, 'For as there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal?' Of the natural soul mention is made in such words as these: 'Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him' (I Cor. 2, 14-15). But of the spiritual things, and he himself is judged of no man'; and again, 'Ye which are spiritual, restore such as one in a spirit of meekness' (Gal. 6, 1). Therefore, it behoves us to show all diligence that, as by our renunciation we have ceased to be carnal—that is to say we have begun to separate ourselves from worldly conversation and to cease from the open and manifest pollution of the flesh—we strive with all our might to lay hold forthwith upon the spiritual state, lest, flattering ourselves because we appear so far as the outward man is concerned to have renounced the world and to have fled from all contagion of fleshly lusts, and arguing that thereby we have achieved the height of perfection, we become thenceforward slacker in our effort to wipe out the other passions of the soul, and slothful, stopping between the two grades of spiritual progress, unable to follow its upward path, imagining that it is enough and to spare as regards our perfection that with our outward aim we appear to be drawn apart from this world's business and pleasures, or that we are untouched by the sins of carnal lust—and thus may be found in that state of lukewarmness which is pronounced the most dangerous of all, liable to be spewed out of the Lord's mouth, in accordance with the words: 'Would thou wert cold or hot, so because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold,

I will spew thee out of my mouth' (Apoc. 3, 16). But he who becomes lukewarm and abuses the very name of monk, and refuses to adopt with fervour and humility the path of his profession, as he is bound to do, being once infected with this pitiable vice and, so to say, unmanned therein, will be no more able either of himself to acquire a perfect spirit, or to accept admonition from another. . . . He becomes in this way worse than the man of the world, because he does not see that he is miserable and blind and naked, or that he stands in need of admonition or instruction from anybody, and therefore he will not listen to the least exhortation of saving words, and cannot perceive that the very name of monk is a weight about him, and is lowering him in the opinion of all. While he is accounted by many as a holy man, and is revered as a servant of God, the only result will be that in future he will suffer a far severer judgment and penalty than would otherwise have been the case.

OF THE USE OF THE WILL IN ACQUIRING EQUILIBRIUM

Between the two desires of the flesh and the spirit, the will of the soul stands in a middle position, not free from blame, nor delighted with the wickedness of sin, nor finding content in the pains of virtue. It seeks relief from fleshly passions, but only on condition of not bearing the consequent pains without which it is impossible to possess what the spirit longs for. It would obtain chastity of body without punishment of the flesh, purity of heart without the toil of watching, it would abound in spiritual virtues and yet retain fleshly ease, it would possess the grace of patience with no irksomeness of contention, practise the humility of Christ, but with no loss of worldly honour; combine the simplicity of the religious life with the following of secular ambition. It desires to serve Christ to the accompaniment of praise and the favour of men; to profess the narrow way of truth without even the least offence to anyone; in a word, its aim is so to pursue the award to come, as not to lose that which is here and now. Such a will can never bring us on to reach true perfection . . . for when yielding up our wills to this condition we are ready to allow ourselves to fall away little by little to such remissness, at once the urging impulses of the flesh rise up, and wounding us with their vices and passions, they refuse altogether to allow us to remain in that state of purity wherein we delight, but drag us along that

cold and thorny path of pleasure which we dread. Again, if inflamed with the Spirit's fervour, we attempt without any regard for the fact of human frailty to throw ourselves in our elation of heart into an immoderate pursuit of virtue, the weakness of the flesh comes in and recalls us and holds us back from such excessive fervour of spirit which is to be blamed. And so it comes about that the desire of the flesh and of the spirit meeting in such a conflict and mutually contradictory, the will of the soul which is not prepared to surrender itself entirely to carnal desire nor yet to the toilsome labour of virtue, is moderated, so to say, by a just balance, while the struggle that goes on gives no place to that more dangerous free will of the soul, and puts a sort of equal weight into each of the scales which draws with accuracy a limit between flesh and spirit, and allows on the one hand the mind aflame with the spirit's fire to have no greater weight, nor on the other the flesh stung with the goads of sin to prevail. And while this warfare is daily occurring in us for our good, we are compelled to approach that fourth thing of which we would have none, namely, that we should attain to purity of heart not by idleness or freedom from care, but by constant toil and contrition of spirit, and that we should retain chastity of the flesh by strict abstinence and fastings, temperance and watchfulness, and acquire again right purpose of heart by readings, vigils, constant prayer, and the loneliness of solitude, and get patience by endurance of hardships; that we should serve our Maker amid blasphemies and reproaches, and follow truth at the cost of the hatred of this world, and its hostility, if need be. But a proper balance will result from these conflicts, and will open up before us a sound and temperate path of virtue between the two, teaching the soldier of Christ ever to walk upon the King's Highway. So it will be that, when on account of the lukewarmness of that cowardly will of which we have spoken, the mind is turned towards fleshly desire, it will be restrained by the desires of the spirit which is quite unwilling to acquiesce in earthly sin, and again, if by excess of fervour our spirit has been raised in the heart's exultation and carried off towards impossible and ill-considered goals, the frailty of the flesh will again draw down the balance to the just mean, and rising above that most lukewarm condition of will, our spirit, with duly moderated fervour and even course, will walk carefully in the way of perfection.

REVIEWS

FR VINCENT McNABB, O.P.: *The Portrait of a Great Dominican*. By Fr Ferdinand Valentine, O.P. (Burns and Oates; 21s.)

All who came in contact with Fr Vincent McNabb during his lifetime will be grieved by that great and much-loved figure being presented to a wider public as one suffering from mental maladjustment due to his relationship with his family in early life. No man could be saner or more of one piece than he was, and few have had a better family background than he had.

Why the author's preconceived theories in the realm of psycho-analysis should be pinned on Fr Vincent is a mystery. They cannot be formed from the evidence given in the book; they cannot even be read into it, but only asserted side by side with that evidence without any connection with it.

We are given a number of commonplace terms of psycho-analysis, such as a sense of inadequacy (inferiority complex), over-compensation, lack of will to community, the struggle between the young Joseph McNabb and Fr Vincent (split personality), conversion, etc., but the only evidence of their relation to the subject of the book is the explosive saying of one who was well known to be given to expressing himself in that manner on any subject.

Fr Vincent was a human being with his own share of the effects of original sin. Like every other human being he had his own individual dispositions influenced by an immense number of unknowable factors from the generations which preceded him. The large family into which he was born, with a father, a man of sterling integrity, and a saintly mother, could have had only the best possible influences on the formation of his character. The author quotes Fr Vincent: 'In no family could there be a more striking example of the necessary division and harmonious co-operation of responsibility and capability'; and in another place: 'I was brought up in an atmosphere of love—not sentimental love, but the service of love'. Strictness on the part of the father and awe of the young for a parent may be considered as matter for psycho-analysis these days, but it was not so when Joseph McNabb was born. Then it was perfectly normal, and more the pity it is not so today. The later letters of Fr Vincent to his father show that awe to have developed into admiration and affection. To say that the evidence in the book on his relation to his parents 'seems to suggest that the sibling rivalry which contributed to his undue self-esteem, ostentation, ambition and lack of will to community was not primary but derivative' is meaningless jargon. How angry Fr Vincent would have been if he had read that, especially as it applied to his own

family which he loved so much. He might have told us in his own inimitable way the meaning of 'sibling rivalry'.

So long as it is thought that a good purpose is served by not only showing but emphasizing Fr Vincent's faults and the efforts he made to overcome them, no objection can be raised. There seems to be no doubt that he was at times self-opinionated, intolerant and headstrong, and these faults of character, together with his efforts to overcome them, may have been a partial cause of the external idiosyncrasies which made him what is commonly known as eccentric.

In spite of his theories, the particular application of which is absurd, in the original sense of being without root, we can be grateful to the author for his painstaking collection of letters and personal impressions of Fr Vincent.

The inclusion of personal affairs of other members of the family which had no bearing on the character and work of Fr Vincent distracts the reader and is in questionable taste. It caters only for that prurient curiosity concerning the private affairs of other people which is so marked a feature of our own time.

We can only hope that some day so much that is worth preserving from this book will be enshrined in another book written by someone who knew Fr Vincent McNabb well and who will not use him as a peg on which to hang their own pet theories.

DAVID DONOHUE, O.P.

THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. By Jean Mouroux. (Sheed and Ward; 16s.)

Our life is hid with Christ in God, and therefore lies beyond our human apprehension, in God who can be reached only through faith. The Christian life is a life in Christ, and only in him is it found in its true perfection; all we have on this earth is an imperfect sharing in his life, deriving from him but lived in the obscurity of faith and the anticipation of hope; of the three foundation virtues of the Christian life only charity will abide for ever. We are pilgrims on a dark road, for though Christ is the Light of the world, his light cannot be seen but only grasped in faith. How then is a Christian experience possible, in the sense of a conscious experience?

This is the problem Fr Mouroux is concerned with in his book. He begins with a short discussion of terms, and a chapter on the Council of Trent, pointing out that it is not the possibility of a Christian experience but the necessity of a clear-cut infallible knowledge of being saved that the Council rejects. Then he comes to the crucial question of the possibility of a conscious possession of faith. Faith is a

supernatural gift of God, and supernatural realities cannot be seen but only believed: how then can we know that we have faith? Fr Mouroux replies, following St Thomas, that we are necessarily aware of our act of faith, our act of belief in Christ in submission to the teaching of his Church, but are not aware of its supernatural character: this is itself a matter of faith. Our life remains hid with Christ, even our own share in his life is not perceived directly, but only inferred from signs interpreted in the light of faith.

Then follows what is probably the most useful part of the book for the ordinary Catholic reader, a description of the Christian life as we find it in St Matthew, St Paul and the first Epistle of St John. This leads naturally to a theological analysis of the Christian life in the Church and in Christ. This would be the obvious place for a discussion of the part that the sacraments have to play in the Christian life; instead the book ends here with an examination of the function of emotion and feeling in the Christian experience, and a final emphasis on the primary nature of faith.

This is an important book, even though it is written in an idiom strange and perhaps at times repellent to English readers. And it must be said that Fr Mouroux has not been happy in his translator; there are many clumsy sentences, numerous non-existent or rare and ungraceful English words ('paranese', 'the face to face' as a noun, 'dehiscence', 'obnubilates'), and there are some mistaken or misleading translations. Mistranslation touches on the farcical with Jeremiah's 'shattering conversation' with Yahweh on page 328. The references cannot always be relied on, though this is also true of the French edition. The meaningless *Christos theou soirian* of page 124 should be *Christon theou sophian*, and Father Damien on page 189 is actually St Peter Damian. In addition to these and other irritating mistakes the printing on the mat side of the pages is often weak or blurred in my copy.

There are, of course, technical points of detail or expression on which one would like to question Fr Mouroux. It is doubtful how far statements like: 'His (the newly-baptized Christian's) most animalistic instincts—aggressiveness and sexuality—are not subject to grace, or penetrated by it, in their specific activity' will fit into St Thomas's scheme of thought, followed on the whole by Fr Mouroux; and doubtful whether the idea of a legitimate 'ontological misery' (page 307) will fit in with what St Thomas has to say in the *Summa* Ia. 63. 3.

But nevertheless we are deeply indebted to Fr Mouroux for a deeper apprehension of what is meant by the name of Christian, and to Sheed and Ward for having made it available in English.

JEROME SMITH, O.P.

FRANCIS THOMPSON AND OTHER ESSAYS. By Fr. Vincent McNabb, O.P.
With an Introduction by G. K. Chesterton. (London: Blackfriars
Publications; 4s. 6d.)

These sixteen essays were first published twenty years ago as an offering to Fr Vincent at the time of his golden jubilee as a Dominican. Mr Hilary Pepler was a kind of arch-conspirator who edited the book with the attractive Ditchling Press imprint, inviting G. K. Chesterton to write his Introduction; and the whole thing was sprung upon Fr Vincent as a lovely surprise. It contains characteristic samples of his varied genius and perpetuates many of the pointed truths he would wish us never to forget, such as the seven principles (promulgated by the archbishops and bishops of England and Wales in 1929) underlying the Catholic attitude on education, principles which have become even more important with the passage of time and have a not merely local, but a world-wide relevance and might well be invoked at the present moment in such distant places as Argentina and the Union of South Africa. A writer reviewing the book in 1935 said Fr McNabb was apparently some sort of socialist who would yet walk Park Lane barefoot to save the soul of a dying plutocrat. If it contained nothing else, the book would be worth having for the two superb pieces, *The Call of St Patrick* (both English and Irish should take it to heart) and the Sermon preached at the funeral of Father Bede Jarrett. Some books soon go out of date, but here is one that, like good wine, improves with the years.

BERNARD DELANY

A VINCENT McNABB ANTHOLOGY. Edited by Francis Edward Nugent.
(Blackfriars Publications; 13s. 6d.)

'It seems to be generally agreed amongst those best qualified to judge', writes Fr Ferdinand Valentine in his *Father Vincent McNabb: A Portrait*, 'that Fr Vincent made little or no contribution to contemporary thought and theology.' When the reader has swallowed that and recovered his breath, he is told on the same page on the authority of one E. H. Haywood that 'He was not a good writer mainly because his mind moved with such dazzling speed that the medium was too slow for him'. There was something in him that was better than anything he ever wrote or said and he wrote rapidly not aiming at fine writing; but to say that he was not a good writer is sheer nonsense. And any one who disputes the fact should be recommended to take a look at this Anthology which contains fair specimens of his prose during all the years of his writing life. Even the Conferences which were for the most part spoken extempore and taken down by a reporter are good writing, even as writing; though obviously they can

convey nothing of the dynamic quality of the living spoken word.

The essay on Francis Thompson is repeated in this book; but many readers will think it is well worth the *encore* and the book is worth keeping for the tribute to G.K.C. written for BLACKFRIARS at the time of Chesterton's death. Fr Vincent (himself a holy man) salutes G.K.C. as fit associate with his fellow Londoner, St Thomas More and, like him, a great Englishman 'whose life bore quartering of philosophy, poetry, chivalry and holiness'.

The final paragraph of the Conference on Perseverance in Prayer (p. 173) is almost prophetic, where Fr Vincent, all unconsciously, describes what happened on his own death-bed when he faced slow starvation with heroic patience and a saint-like gaiety.

B.D.

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST: THOMAS A'KEMPIS, A NEW TRANSLATION by Edgar Daplyn, F.R.S.L. (Sheed and Ward; 6s.)

The author of this new translation of the *Imitation* rightly deplores the many defective versions of this golden book, so frequently mauled by translators who have sometimes cut and altered according to their own views and prejudices. Still, there have been some very good English translations, notably those of William Atkinson, Richard Wytford and the Jesuit Anthony Hoskins, not to mention the well-known Bishop Challoner. And to bring it up to date and satisfy the contemporary demand for modernizing our translations, we have the recently published rendering of Abbot McCann (Burns and Oates) and Leo Sherley-Price (Penguin Classics). It is difficult to say to which of these we would award the palm; both are so superlatively good; and both, we are inclined to think, are better than this latest translation.

No Scripture references are given and it is not always clear that Scripture is being quoted because the author has a version of his own. 'De lectione Santarum Scripturarum' is rendered 'Of reading holy writings', when clearly the Bible is referred to. Thomas A'Kempis is described as a Dutch monk. Isn't it an anachronism to call him Dutch? He was actually born in what is now Germany. He wasn't a monk, but a Canon Regular. And is the vigorous, lucid, rhythmical Latin of Thomas A'Kempis accurately described as 'a dead tongue'?

B.D.

THE MAKING OF A FRIAR. The Script of a Broadcast by the B.B.C. from the Dominican Priory, Hawkesyard. (Blackfriars Publications; 2s.)

This broadcast of the Solemn Profession of a Dominican laybrother is surely a model of its kind. The austere simple Dominican rite of Solemn Profession is impressive in itself; but its significance is

admirably brought out by Father Columba Ryan's commentary, by Father Provincial's Admonition, and by the choice of hymns from the Westminster Hymnal and passages from the Old Testament read in dramatic form by single voices and choir. The result not only provides a persuasive and clear statement of the ideal of the religious life; it is also an object-lesson for English Catholic broadcasters in the way to convey unfamiliar doctrines against which strong prejudices exist. Deep issues are not shirked, but they are stated in an idiom which is both simple and dignified, and which speaks to the Christian and Biblical tradition still alive among a large proportion of the English people.

ÆLRED SILLEM, O.S.B.

LITURGIE EN LANGUE VIVANTE. Par Cyrille Korolevskij. (Editions du Cerf; Blackfriars Publications; n.p.)

This book is not a plea either on behalf of or against the use of the mother tongue in Catholic worship, nor, except incidentally here and there, does it consider arguments advanced on either side: it is primarily historical. It is in two parts. The first examines what has been done by way of liturgical translation in Eastern lands from the earliest days of Christianity, showing the governing principle at work, and its application down to contemporary times. Part Two does the same for the West; it shows how the Eastern vernacular principle gained a very limited recognition in the West during the ninth century, but was rejected in practice under various influences, though never being entirely abandoned.

Whoever knows anything of Father Korolevskij does not need to be told that this is an exceedingly thorough piece of work, displaying an almost uncanny knowledge of the by-ways of ecclesiastical history and of liturgical detail. This knowledge is always derived from the sources and, for recent times, from Father Korolevskij's own personal observations and experience as one of the most weighty and active consultants of the Sacred Eastern Congregation and of the Commission for Eastern Liturgy. At the same time the book is for the general reader, and not encumbered with masses of documentation. In recording Bishop Goldwell's observation at the Council of Trent, 'that there are many things that ought to be understood by the people at Mass besides the gospel', Father Korolevskij has made a small slip: he says Saint Asaph is in Scotland. The Roman Martyrology (May 1) is equally mistaken in saying it is in England.

This book should be studied by everyone interested in the 'vernacular' debate. It is too easily said that liturgy in Latin is 'the Church's tradition'. That this has for long been the general tradition of the

West is of course true; but the East had a quite different tradition in the matter. And neither East nor West alone constitutes The Church.

DONALD ATTWATER

THE DOCTRINE OF THE VOID. By Rev. Leonard A. McCann, C.S.B.
(The Basilian Press, Toronto. Duckett, London; 21s.)

The most satisfying part of this book is the first, an excellent summary of St John of the Cross's teaching of the voiding of the faculties by the active and passive nights of the soul. For this is the main theme of the book despite its misleading title, which suggests an esoteric Eastern doctrine rather than Christian mystical theology. Nevertheless, while reading the latter parts of the work, I could not rid myself of the impression that Father McCann, rather like Don Quixote, is fighting windmills. Who are those theologians whom he implicitly corrects, who would assert that St Thomas and St John of the Cross are teaching opposite doctrines? He is trying to prove by a wealth of citations that, despite certain superficial differences, both agree in fundamentals. But are there any serious Thomists who deny this? He stresses again and again that the differences are due to the fact that St Thomas treats his subject as a speculative theologian and St John of the Cross as a 'practitioner' of the spiritual life—surely something quite obvious to anyone even superficially acquainted with both. Nevertheless, the book contains much useful ammunition for those who have to defend true mysticism against the assaults of some of our contemporaries who, as Father L. J. Bondy, C.S.B., writes in his Foreword, 'place a dangerous faith in irrational forces'.

The book is unfortunately marred by its style. Whenever it is possible to choose between a good English word of two syllables and a Latin equivalent of four to six, the author invariably plunges for the latter. Thus: 'The laws and conditions of their development in the direction of Christian perfection, as manifested in the revealed word of God, wherein we find concrete exemplification of supernatural perfection', or 'Our connaturality with God is rendered operative by the virtue of charity' and, of course, 'contact' instead of touch even when translating the French verb *toucher*!

While our theologians are writing like this, can we really blame non-Catholics if they regard our religion as a foreign importation?

H. C. GRAEF

WILLIAM WESTON: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN ELIZABETHAN. Translated from the Latin by Philip Caraman, s.j. With a Foreword by Evelyn Waugh. (Longmans; 18s.)

Father Caraman's *Weston* has all the enthralling excitement of his

edition of Fr Gerard's autobiography, which appeared in 1952. Though the characters, and the place in history, of the two missionaries are different, the setting and the mission and even the very details of the two stories, translated here with a freshness far more unclouded than that of Fr John Morris's original English versions, chime together the whole way through.

When Fr Weston landed secretly in Suffolk in 1584, there was not a Jesuit at large in the land; and the 'springboard' from the Low Countries, formed of the Jesuit 'invasion' of 1580 and of the Douai College of Fr Allen, was not yet secure. He himself was at large only two years, in which he secured the conversion of Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, received and reconciled many other Catholics who had fallen away during the first twenty-five years of Penal Laws, and electrified not a few (including his modern admirers) by the spectacularity of his exorcisms. His arrest came in the context of the Babington Plot, albeit he had given that headstrong zealot no encouragement. Then in 1588, the climax of the Armada year, he was among the first batch of Catholic gentry and clergy confined in the famous Wisbech Castle prison. Here he remained, and in the Tower, till banished on the accession of James I, when he went to Rome and then Valladolid.

The story is an ideal complement to that of Fr Gerard. In Fr Weston we have a man of unimpeachable sanctity and missionary placidity. He is far from things political. What he hears he records carefully and accurately and gives his sources. His narrative will be invaluable for its sidelights on the day-to-day conditions of Catholic living during that first penal generation; above all, for its inside picture—so straightforward and simple—of the ways in which Wisbech Castle became a veritable centre of the Catholic apostolate, with classes run by the priests for the children of the laity imprisoned there. But those who want the inside scandals of the 'Wisbech stirs' will not find them here.

It is a book of extremes. At one extreme, the tension of escape and of capture, graphically described. At the other, and far more characteristic of the man, a passage like this: 'Here I stayed a few days. Several Catholic priests visited us. And it was here that I made a start with the work that was our appointed task; and before long my presence became known to many people.' Those words might have come from the Acts of the Apostles. They, and the passages like them, indeed link him back to Gospel times. His place in his own age, though, is perhaps best set-off by the contemporary phrase quoted by Evelyn Waugh in the Introduction: 'If I spoke with the tongue of Fr Campion, and wrote with the pen of Fr Persons, and led the austere life of Fr Weston, and yet had not charity, it would avail me nothing'.

A. C. F. BEALES

SURPRISING MYSTICS. By Herbert Thurston, S.J. (Burns and Oates; 18s.)

This latest collection of Father Thurston's essays is as interesting as its predecessors, *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism* and *Ghosts and Poltergeists*. The longest, and, in the opinion of the present reviewer most interesting, chapter is that on Anna Catherine Emmerich, the famous nineteenth-century German stigmatic, whose visions, published in English under the title *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, still appear with iron regularity every Lent in our Catholic bookshops. Father Thurston unerringly lays his finger on the weakest spot in the amazing story of this visionary, which alone would be enough to discredit her: 'But what appears perhaps to militate even more strongly than actual errors of fact against the idea that Sister Emmerich's visions were supernatural in origin is her own conviction of the supreme importance to mankind of the revelations thus made . . . further investigation has only deepened the impression that the good Sister insisted upon the supernatural and veridical character of these visions with a tenacity which is distinctly foreign to the spirit of such ecstasies as St Theresa, let us say. She declared that the priests and others who had been so lukewarm in making provision for the recording of her revelations incurred a serious responsibility for which they would some day have to render an account to God. She proclaimed again and again that the knowledge imparted to her was unique and was meant to be given to all the world.' (p. 82.)

I have cited the passage at such length because it provides one of the surest criteria for distinguishing between true mystic visions and their neurotic counterfeits. Unfortunately the importance certain visionaries attach to their experiences is sometimes shared by their director who 'having filled his mind with mystical theology and with the marvels recorded in the Lives of the Saints, is apt to welcome with enthusiasm the not too common experience of a soul that is exaltée, but fervent and courageous. . . . If he were equally well-versed in the literature of what we may, for brevity's sake, call hysteria, all would be well. But that is a rare combination.' (p. 168.) In many of the cases treated by Father Thurston, such as those of Christina of Stommeln or Domenica dal Paradiso, their directors were themselves their greatest admirers, and so contributed to the development of the phenomena instead of aiming at their curtailment.

It is unfortunate that the book should be called 'Surprising Mystics', though this is not the fault of its editor, Father Crehan; for Father Thurston himself uses the term constantly of the persons he investigates. But is it not time, at least in theological works, to restrict this term to the people who really are mystics in the accepted sense of the term, that is to say to those who, as for example St Catherine of Siena,

St Teresa, St John of the Cross, have reached a high degree of union with God, whether this be accompanied by ecstasies and visions or not? A person who does not enjoy such a union, though he or she may be subject to trances and exhibit other unusual phenomena, surely ought not to be called a mystic. Hence very few of the subjects of the study under review could be so named; several, e.g. Marie Julie Jahenny, John Thom, 'Georges Marasco' and the false visionaries of Lourdes were no more than deluded neurotics. In fact true mystics are very rarely surprising'.

Apart from this misleading terminology, however, the book is a mine of information, containing much highly interesting and otherwise not easily accessible material. The comments of Father Thurston, sometimes tantalizingly sparing, should be pondered by all who are interested, whether professionally or otherwise, in mystical phenomena and their neurotic counterfeits.

HILDA C. GRAEF

A NEW WAY OF THE CROSS. Contemplated by Father Raymond, O.C.S.O., illustrated by John Andrews. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 10s. 6d.)

This is certainly a new approach to the Stations. Stark dark pictures of hands, vivid emotional descriptions of what the hands suggest to the mind and heart of a holy Cistercian with a flair for phrases that register. The hands are the hands of our Lord, bound with cord, receiving the cross, pressed to the ground when he falls, pierced with the nails. As a method of meditation it is irresistible. Our Lady's hands and Veronica's hands are also firmly depicted. The twelfth Station is just the two feet of our Lord nailed with one nail to the wood. The fourteenth is the Shroud draping his feet. On the page opposite each picture you have Father Raymond's reflections. He follows the liturgical thread, the Mass, the pervading idea of membership of the mystical body of Christ, self-immolation. The style, rather dramatic American, harmonises with the pictures. Both are very effective.

G.M.C.

WHY HAST THOU COME? By John Carr, C.S.S.R. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 10s. 6d.)

This is a humble helpful book, a useful stimulus for those who have lived the religious life for some years and have become slack. It also provides good strong meat for those, men and women, who are actively engaged in religious life in the world in Secular Institutes.

Written in an easy style, with chapters on very practical and important subjects such as habits and tepidity, on what 'trying' really means, on what constitutes 'sliding back', it should be on the bookshelf of everyone who wishes to be exclusively a servant of God and of our Lady. 'Spiritual consumption' is ably offset by a description of the good health of the soul and of the reward, exceeding great, not only for those who finally reach heaven but to those to whom heaven in daily life is the swing of the pendulum that makes God present in all things.

K.J.B.

SAINT PHILOMENA. By Sister M. H. Mohr, S.C., together with a study of the *Curé d'Ars* by Paul Doncoeur. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 9s. 6d.)

The story of St Philomena is the story of her miracles. The rest is conjecture and private revelation which may or may not convince. There is a saint in heaven whom we have agreed to call Philemon who seems to have died very young as a martyr, in the time of the early persecutions of the Church, and who works today so many miracles that she is as well-known as almost any of the modern saints. Around the scanty historical evidence, using the abundant modern evidence, Sr M. H. Mohr has written a successful presentation of the little saint which makes her yet more unreal to the imagination but more real to the soul. Fanciful, cleverly stylized in modern journalistic prettily sentimental (incongruously so in parts), it is nevertheless readable and arresting. The 'revelations' are persuasively, but I thought inadequately, presented. How poor an instrument is this brisk journalistic style for the presentation of historical evidence!

The last fifteen pages are a most attractive sketch of the great saint with whose name St Philomena is always associated, the *Curé of Ars* by Paul Doncoeur. This is a really convincing vignette. I was struck by the similarity between the spirit of the *Curé* and that of St Thérèse of Lisieux and by the wonderful linking, over the centuries, of the two elements of all saints' lives: the marvellous and the unspectacular, the heroic. The unknown girl-martyr of ancient Rome, the miracle-loving Neapolitan crowds who surged round her body sixteen hundred years later, Pauline Jaricot (whose cure is dramatically described in this book), the *Curé of Ars*, consistently attributing his miracles to St Philomena, hiding behind her, and St Thérèse, shunning marvels yet set in the centre of marvels by innumerable miracles. One reader at least thanks Sr Mohr most sincerely for this brave attempt to streamline some essential features of sanctity.

G.M.C.

EXTRACTS

NEARLY every month we have to welcome a new Carmelite review. It is not surprising that Aylesford, which has become such a spiritual centre in the last few years, should wish to add to the printed periodicals of their Order. So now we have the *Aylesford Review*, a handsomely produced quarterly, for 4s. 6d. post free *per annum*. (St Albert's Press, The Friars, Aylesford, Kent.) We only hope that the Carmelite cult will not become sectarian. True enough there is a vast heritage of saints and saintly writings upon which the Carmelites can and do draw, but in the admirable aim of this new review, for example, 'of quickening the life of the spirit for many', it would be well to draw upon the entire, catholic heritage of the Church, and then through the lively Carmelite channels to give it to the world. *Aylesford Review* gathers in its name

a summary and symbol of the work and mission of Carmel. From the First Order (the Friars), and the Second Order, of enclosed nuns, the spirit of Carmel passes, through the Secular Institute, the Third Order, and the Scapular Confraternity, out into the wide spaces of God's Church; for each religious Order has its own special mission and task in the building up of the kingdom of God.

Certainly this is true. But fundamentally the mission of every Order is the same; drawing on the eternal truth of God's Word and on the inexhaustible spring of his grace through the Redemption, each Order with its special means sanctifies its members and sanctifies the world. This universal character of any true spirituality is happily emphasized in an article in the same review on 'St Thérèse and our Blessed Lady'. The author, F. F. M. Limcaco, looks for the secret of St Thérèse's great power in the world today, and discovers it in her devotion to our Lady.

Devotion to the Mother of God is a necessary condition of sanctity. As the mother of the Redeemer and of men, Mary holds a unique position in the whole drama of the redemption. There is no single point in this divine plan in which Mary does not have a share. 'Such is the unchangeable will of him who has willed that we should have everything through Mary', St Bernard tell us. . . . As a Carmelite Thérèse was a consecrated daughter of our Lady of Mount Carmel. We must not forget that Carmel above all is Mary's Order.

And so too, we are pleased to remember, are all the other great Orders of the Church—to remember only the Cistercians, the Servites, the Franciscans and Dominicans.

And may we ask the editor of this new review to give us an alternative running headline so that we may know the title of the articles as we

turn the pages—and also a little less Gothic lettering would enhance otherwise exquisite typography.

FÊTES ET SAISONS continues to appear in its attractive combination of excellent photography and popular yet profound presentation of Christian doctrine. The latest are the third in the series *Albums Bibliques* 'Le Roi David', and *La Prière du Foyer* (Cerf: Blackfriars Publications, 1s. 6d.). The first makes an excellent background for the Psalms which in their new translation and modern musical setting are gaining such a hold of the ordinary French folk—it gives a popular conspectus of the history of King David and concludes by relating his kingdom with the kingdom of God. In 586 B.C. David's kingdom is finished—nothing is left of it—but after six centuries Jesus is born in Bethlehem, David's royal town, the true Son of David; and so begins the kingdom of God. The number on Family Prayer deals with the different 'prayer-ages', prayer and life, how to learn to pray, and so on. The chief means of learning to pray are the 'Our Father' and the Psalms.

NOTICES

THE NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL have put out no less than fifty-nine 'Peace Aims Pamphlets'. The latest (price 9d. from the Council, 2 Great James Street, W.C.1) is by Dr J. Bronowski on *The Dilemma of the Scientist*, in which the author urges that the scientist has the right to his private conscience and should be free to exercise it without fear of the consequences. In the scientific world, he maintains, heresy is duty—that is to say the publicising of the personal views of the scientist in his own field however unpalatable to authority. There is possibly some truth in this view within the limited sphere of the scientist, but the author considers that dissidents are the ones who change society, and in his eyes this change seems to be welcome without qualification. It is difficult to see how peace will result from such careless, uncritical talk. It is always possible that even a scientist may have a false conscience—and so the dilemma remains.

FOUR ROSARY LEAFLETS, at only 1d. each from the Montfort Press, Burbo Bank Road, Liverpool, have been written by Fr Wilfrid Jukka, a Montfort Father. In them he sets out 'to provide a simple explanation of the Rosary system of spiritual progress for all Christians of whatever denomination'. The technique is reminiscent of the League for God leaflets—popular, striking titles addressed rather to the non-Catholic than to the Catholic. The fourth one deals with the Atomic Bomb and Communism—answered this time not by the scientist's conscience but by our Lady's promises at Fatima.

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PIT PONIES

There are still 13,400 used (and stabled) underground in British coalmines. No other country has such an enormous number. They should not be worked in mines for more than 11 years, and have a holiday on the surface every year. Electric battery lamps should be fixed to their collars, or their roadways electrically lit. Small ponies under 14 hands high should not be employed, and ample dimensions for comfortable travel always guaranteed. They should not be used on steep inclines or overloaded. The pace at which pit ponies work is much faster than that above ground and even if their drivers were invariably kind, their life cannot be a happy one. Nobody outside the employment of the National Coal Board or the Ministry of Fuel ever sees the ponies actually at work below ground or when brought up for good and destroyed. Why not a time limit to the use of ponies in mines? Why not an independent inquiry into what can be done in this way? Contributions gratefully received.—
D. Jeffrey Williams, Secretary, Pit Ponies' Protection Society, 69 Carlton Hill, London, N.W.8.

CHRISTMAS GIFT BOOKS

A VINCENT McNABB ANTHOLOGY edited by Francis Edward Nugent. This is a good anthology, offering something from the varied types of work to which Father Vincent turned his hand. The reader will find that he cannot help forming a picture of the saintly and gifted man who was Father Vincent.

13s. 6d.

THE LIFE OF ST DOMINIC by Bede Jarrett, O.P. Since his death, the personality of St Dominic has been a point of contention between the Church and her enemies. Here Father Bede shows the real man—the flame of truth and love that, in the footsteps of his Master, went to seek the sheep that was lost.

12s. 6d.

THE EUCHARIST AND THE CONFESSIONAL by F. D. Joret, O.P. Father Joret here treats of the Sacraments of Our Lord, he stresses the importance of frequent communion and discusses the remission of sins. After reading this book, the Christian will have a deeper understanding of the gifts Our Lord offers for our salvation.

13s. 6d.

MY SERVANT CATHERINE by Arrigo Levasti. Here is a splendid translation of Arrigo Levasti's *Saint Catherine of Siena*, first published in Turin in 1947. The author shows admirably the source of the saint's power, humility and attractiveness—her sincere and consuming love of God.

21s.

A SAINT OF THE WEEK by Desmond Murray, O.P. Forty-eight brief lives of saints, some famous, some little known, are here presented in a way that ensures general effective enlivening of that deep, everyday 'catechism' holiness to which every soul of man responds.

15s.

THE CONVENT AND THE WORLD by Sister Mary Laurence, O.P. This volume will be of particular value to young women who think they may have a vocation, to Catholics and others wishing to understand the true essence of religious life, and for Superiors to place in the hands of enquirers.

9s. 6d.

AN INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPLATIVE MEDITATION by F. D. Joret, O.P. The art of spiritual recollection has almost been forgotten by too many of the laity, and Father Joret here seeks to show his readers the predispositions necessary for fruitful recollection.

4s. 6d.

Our new Catalogue, which has just been published, will gladly be sent on request.

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